EU CITIZENS
STAY INFORMED

The information in this leaflet relates to the scheme when it fully opens by 30 March 2019.

**EU Settlement Scheme**

In line with the draft Withdrawal Agreement, the UK and the EU have agreed that your current rights will continue until 31 December 2020. If you are an EU citizen* you and your family members will be able to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 31 December 2020. This allows you and your family members to continue to live, work and study in the UK. It means you will continue to have ongoing rights to healthcare, work arrangements and access to benefits and public services as you do now.

**Settled status**

If you have settled status, also known as indefinite leave to remain or enter, this means there is no time limit on how long you can stay in the UK. EU citizens who have been granted settled status will have the same access to work, study, healthcare, pensions and other benefits in the UK according to the same rules as now.

- Subject to approval by Parliament, you should be able to spend up to five years in a row outside the UK without losing your settled status.
- If you are absent from the UK for more than five consecutive years, your settled status will expire.
- If you have a child born in the UK and you are settled here, that child will be a British citizen.

Settled status will run alongside any rights you have as an EU citizen outlined in the EEA Regulations until 31 December 2020.

**Pre-settled status**

If you have pre-settled status, also known as limited leave to remain or enter, this means you can stay in the UK for a period of five years. This will allow you to remain in the UK until you are eligible for settled status, generally once you have lived continuously in the UK for five years. EU citizens who have pre-settled status will have the same access to work, study, healthcare, pensions and other benefits in the UK according to the same rules as now. Pre-settled status will run alongside any rights you have as an EU citizen outlined in the EEA Regulations until 31 December 2020.

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*EU citizens used throughout refers to EEA and Swiss nationals, who are all eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.
**Close family member**

A close family member is a spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner, dependant child, dependant grandchild, dependant parent or dependant grandparent. A family member can come from anywhere in the world and does not need to be from the EU. British family members are not eligible to apply.

**Continuous residence**

You will need to have been continuously resident in the UK for five consecutive years (less in some circumstances) to be eligible to get settled status straightaway. If you have been continuously resident in the UK for less than five years you will be eligible for pre-settled status which allows you to stay in the UK until you have reached the five years generally needed to be eligible for settled status. If your continuous residence has been broken, time spent in the UK before the time it was broken cannot be counted.

Continuous residence generally means that – over five consecutive years – you have not been outside the UK for more than six months in total, in any 12 month period. There is no restriction on the number of times you can be outside the UK, provided that the total period of time outside the UK is not more than six months, in any 12 month period.

There are some exceptions. You can have a single absence from the UK for no more than 12 months if it is for an important reason, such as pregnancy, childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training, or an overseas posting for work. Any period outside the UK on compulsory military service is allowed. Continuous residence is broken if you have been subject to a deportation order, exclusion order or exclusion decision. It can also be broken by periods of imprisonment.

**Implementation period**

In line with the draft Withdrawal Agreement, the implementation period will run from the date the UK leaves the EU on 29 March 2019 until 31 December 2020. This will enable the UK and the EU, businesses and public services to put in place the new arrangements required. The rights of EU citizens will remain unchanged until 30 June 2021, provided that they were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020. The EU Settlement Scheme will fully open by 30 March 2019 and applications will be open until 30 June 2021.